



Sen. Joyce Mulliken's

UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

13TH LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT

SUMMER 2003

Sen. Joyce Mulliken

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Committee Assignments

- Land Use & Planning
(Chair)
- Highways &
Transportation
- Higher Education
- Commerce & Trade

Dear Friends,

It has been a long and challenging session, filled with successes and disappointments alike. I'd like to take a few moments in this newsletter to highlight some of the things accomplished by the 2003 Legislature.

First off, I want you to know that one of the most important principles guiding me this year reflects what many of you told me when you contacted my office: **NO NEW TAXES!**

We entered this last session with a record \$2.6 billion budget deficit, due to years of irresponsible and unsustainable budgeting, coupled with a struggling economy. Plugging that hole without raising taxes proved to be challenging, but not impossible!

In the Senate, Republican budget writers got to work right away, working with committee chairs to identify areas where budgets could be trimmed in order to fund the greatest number of priorities within limited revenue without a general tax increase. As a freshman senator asked to serve as a committee chair, I was able to participate in this process firsthand.

The second guiding principle that stayed with me throughout the year was a simple litmus test that many Republican senators used to gauge the importance of legislation: "Does this bill move the economy forward—or does it move it backward? Does it save the state money—or does it cost the state money? Will this legislation help businesses create jobs—or prevent job growth in our state?"

At each moment where a decision needed to be made, I heard these principles in the voices of so many of you who have called, written, faxed and e-mailed my office. Your participation and encouragement consistently let me know I was on the right track! You deserve accolades for your involvement and I sincerely thank you for your input.

Please feel free to contact me any time should you have a question or comment. If your church, civic, or community organization would like a legislative update please call my district office in Ephrata, to schedule a time, at (509) 754-6000.

In your service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "joyce".

Sen. Joyce Mulliken
13th Legislative District

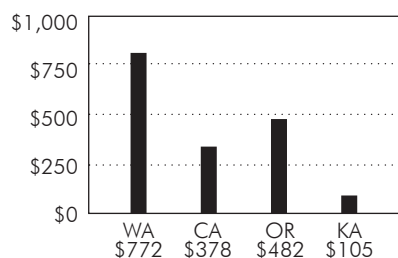


Landing the Boeing 7E7 in Moses Lake

The state of Washington is in the economic fight of its life, and Boeing means jobs, plain and simple. An estimated 1,200 jobs will be created at the plant with thousands more jobs at stake due to the “multiplier effect”—service and retails jobs.

Washington is competing with 17 other states to win the bid to build Boeing’s new 7E7. But years of regulations and an unfair unemployment insurance system has put us at a disadvantage over other states.

Currently, *Boeing pays a payroll tax* of \$772 per employee in Washington, far more than in other states where Boeing is located.



During the special sessions, we were successful in passing legislation to reform the unemployment insurance system and workers’ compensation for hearing loss. The main point in these changes is JOBS! People would rather work than receive government benefits, which is why the Boeing machinists agreed to these reforms.

To Boeing’s credit they stood firm to help all of Washington’s businesses by knowing, *if it is good enough for Boeing then it is good for the rest of Washington’s businesses*. It’s frustrating that it took Boeing’s muscle to move the state in this direction, but it was also satisfying that these changes will help small businesses across the state.

We also passed legislation that will provide up to \$3 billion in tax incentives to Boeing if they choose Washington to build the 7E7. These tax incentives are in the form of B&O tax credits, sales tax exemptions and property tax relief.

It is important to note that these tax incentives will not take any current revenues out of the state’s pockets. The estimated savings to Boeing is based upon future sales and plant expansions.

However, I believe the state’s “ace up the sleeve” may very well be in our own back yard.

With the high costs of power and housing, coupled with the nasty traffic snarls so common to the Puget Sound region, the west side of the state is growing less attractive to Boeing executives.

In Moses Lake, we have one of the world’s longest runways, 340-plus days of perfect flying weather, low power costs, low housing costs (compared to the rest of the state), a lower cost of living, and no traffic messes! While there are no guarantees, I believe Eastern/Central Washington will be one of the finalists for the plant site.

Boeing not the only business that needs relief

It has been said so many times before that it is now reaching cliché status: Washington’s business climate stinks!

To help get our economy moving and people back to work, we passed several regulatory reform bills that will make it easier for people to do business in our state.

ESB 5256—This measure insists on the completion of cost-benefit analyses earlier in the rule-making process.

ESSB 5766—This measure requires 200 days notice to businesses affected by significant rules. (*Significant rules are those that impose penalties or sanctions.*)

However, Gov. Locke continues to frustrate many in the business community by vetoing common sense legislation.

ESHB 1530—He vetoed a bill that passed the Senate 35-14 and passed the House 83-15. This bill allows citizens or businesses to challenge agency rules in Clark, Spokane, Whatcom and Yakima counties, not just Thurston

County, which is now the case. This would have kept people from having to drive clear across the state when making their case against government agencies.

ESB 5257—Locke also vetoed a bill that requires the governor to sign significant new rules proposed by cabinet level agencies. Someone, other than a faceless and nameless bureaucrat, needs to be held responsible for rules that state agencies thrust onto the public.

You can bet these issues will come up again and when they do, I intend to remind the governor of all his pro-Boeing speeches. He needs to know small businesses and mom-and-pop stores are just as important to our economy as big businesses!

According to NFIB statistics, small businesses make up roughly 95 percent of all businesses in Washington and provide roughly 60 percent of all private-sector jobs! That makes small businesses the number one employer in Washington State.

Unfinished business:

Like every session I've been involved with, there are always issues left unresolved or results that are disappointing.

Land Use & Planning

My favorite quote from former Sen. Harold Hochstatter is:

"The issue is not the issue. Who decides the issue is the issue. If you decide the issue you are a free man. If a politician decides the issue you can un-elect him, but if a bureaucrat decides the issues you are his pawn and practically without recourse."

His words ring true when dealing with land use issues. We've seen our land use policies (the GMA, SMA, SEPA, etc.) end up in the hands of nameless and faceless bureaucrats from an assortment of state and federal agencies.

As chair of the Senate Land Use and Planning Committee my overall focus is to bring land use decisions under one umbrella, identify successes and failures, and to lower the costs by eliminating duplication of rules and overlapping processes.

Just like *different* statewide policies are needed to protect our natural resources and industries like agriculture, mining, logging and fishing, statewide plans for land use must be flexible to local and regional needs!

The Senate passed several good bills for landowners this year, only to see them killed in the Democrat-controlled House.



Small business health care fix



One of the most disheartening things this year was the Legislature's failure to

address the crisis facing small businesses who would like to offer employees health care insurance.

In 1963, there was one mandated benefit required of insurance sold in Washington. By 2002, there were more than 45. While larger businesses may be able to cope with these mandates, small businesses cannot. Therefore, we have many small businesses that cannot afford to offer health care insurance to workers.

I cosponsored SB 5521 which allows insurance companies to offer different health care pack-

ages based on customer needs, not state mandates. Under this bill, coverage would still include such basic services as optometrists, registered and advanced nurse practitioners, chemical dependency treatment, and mammograms. This passed the Senate with bipartisan support, but died in the House of Representatives.

As a result, business owners will be faced with three choices: they will be forced to purchase insurance plans with higher deductibles; or, they will stop insuring workers' dependants; or, they will not offer health care coverage at all!

If our true goal is to ensure affordable basic health care coverage for the workers in our state, this would have been the way to do it.

Ergonomics

The current ergonomics rule, while still being phased in, is still causing many small and large businesses—especially those in the agriculture industry—to reconsider whether to keep their businesses open.

These ergonomics rules are based on flawed cost-benefit analysis, questionable science and unreasonable exposure limits. They are also deterring outside businesses from coming to our state.

Again, the Senate passed legislation to make the ergonomics rules voluntary. It also had provisions to disseminate ergonomics information easier. But, once again, the Democrat-controlled House killed the bill.

Federal “Do Not Call List” will soon be in operation

The Federal Trade Commission (the nation’s consumer protection agency) and the states will begin enforcing the National “Do Not Call” Registry on Oct. 1, 2003. That’s when consumers who put their numbers on the registry by August 31, 2003, will notice a downturn in the number of telemarketing calls they get. To register on line go to www.donotcall.gov

Placing your number on the National Do Not Call Registry will stop most, but not all, telemarketing calls. Non-profits and charities may

continue to call. Any business that has a relationship with you may continue to call and credit card companies may call to upgrade your card. For more information visit the Federal Trade Commission’s Web site at: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/donotcall/index.html or call 1-888-382-1222 (TTY 1-866-290-4236)



Minimum wage

Washington now has the second highest minimum wage rate in the nation behind Alaska! Higher minimum wages rates, especially in the agriculture industry, drive up the costs of goods and make it more difficult for Washington to compete.

Employers all over Washington are cutting jobs as the minimum wage climbs.

In the end, it is all about jobs. You can pay fewer people more, or can maintain and create more jobs for people who are out of work.

I don’t want to sound like a broken record, but once again, the Senate passed legislation to address this issue, only to be disappointed by the House.

Minimum Wage around the Country as of Jan. 1, 2003

1	Alaska	\$7.15
2	Washington	\$7.01
3	Connecticut	\$6.90
3	Oregon	\$6.90
5	Massachusetts	\$6.75
5	California	\$6.75
7	Vermont	\$6.25
7	Maine	\$6.25
7	Hawaii	\$6.25
10	Rhode Island	\$6.15
10	Delaware	\$6.15



Annexation: Creating the "double majority" petition method



The Washington State Supreme Court ruled last year the petition method of annexation granted owners of highly valued property more privilege than other property owners. While the election method of annexation is still a valid method, it does not allow for the annexation of uninhabited land.

As Chair of the Senate Land Use and Planning Committee, addressing the annexation issue was one of my top priorities. The committee held several work sessions and public hearings to gain input from

citizens, municipalities and taxing districts. The end result was SSB 5409.

This bill creates a "double-majority" petition method where both a majority of voters and property owners would have to approve future annexations.

It is important to give property owners an equal say in the annexation process, which the Supreme Court supported by their recent ruling. This legislation brings clarity and fairness to the direct petition method of annexation, and saves costs of an unnecessary election.

Health Care Issues

National expenditures for prescription drugs is one of the fastest growing components of health care spending, increasing on average 18 percent per year. As the greatest consumers of prescription drugs, seniors are finding it more and more difficult to afford the medicines they need to keep them healthy.

This session the Legislature went to great lengths to ensure session did not end without passing a prescription drug bill that would help seniors and disabled residents better afford the drugs they need.

We also passed legislation that will protect rural hospitals from an overabundance of emergency care cases by the medically indigent. Money has been set aside to pay for emergency room visits for those who do not carry health care coverage. This will possibly save some of our rural hospitals from having to close their doors.



I want to invite those of you who live in Kittitas or Yakima counties to join me at the Kittitas County Courthouse on the second Thursday of each month (excluding September), from 9:00am to 4:00pm. This will be a time for you to tell me your thoughts and opinions on state government or to share your experiences with a state agency. You are welcome to just drop in or schedule an appointment by calling the Ephrata office at (509) 754-6000.

**Kittitas County Courthouse, Room 108
205 W. 5th Ave.
Ellensburg, WA**

Return Address

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Sen. Joyce Mulliken

PO Box 40413

Olympia, WA 98504-0413



One of my duties as your elected official is to keep you informed. This last session, I sent out weekly legislative updates via e-mail to several hundred constituents. This is a highly effective and cost-conscious way to communicate during the hectic weeks of session.

If you would like to be added my e-mail distribution list for weekly session updates for next year, fill in the information below and mail the panel back to my Ephrata office or stop by yourself and drop it off.

Name: _____

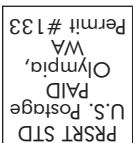
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